



Communicating School Climate Data

Jean Synodinos

Senior Communication Specialist, ICF Macro
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A background image of a forest with sunlight filtering through the trees, creating a warm, golden glow. The text is overlaid on a black rectangular box in the upper half of the image.

**If a tree falls in the forest,
but no one's there to hear it...**

**Today's audiences are tomorrow's
champions for school climate.**

Our Audiences Need to Know

- How improved school climate positively impacts:
 - Academic outcomes
 - Students' ability to learn
 - Teachers' ability to teach
 - Physical and emotional safety for all
 - Human relationships
 - School connectedness

First, they need to *know* (raise awareness)...
Then, they need to *act* (change)!

Challenges to Change



“If you tell us to change how we do things, are you saying that we’ve been wrong?”

Think Strategically: As Easy As 1-2-3-4

1. **GOAL:** What do we want our audience to do based on the data/information?
2. **AUDIENCES:** Who must we reach to help us meet our goals?
3. **MESSAGES:** What data/information do audiences need to hear to persuade them to change, and will it resonate?
4. **DELIVERY:** How (and how often) do they need to hear our message?



What Do We Want Audiences to Do?

- Do we need support for specific curricula, programs, services, data collection, more?
- Are we asking teachers, principals, staff, and others to change the way they work?
- Are we asking students and families to change the way they live?



Who Can Help Change School Climate?

School district administration

Parents

School boards

Teachers

Business
community

Students

Faith-based
organizations

Community
organizations

Policymakers



Media

Many, many more

**These groups are our audiences for
communication.**

How We Make Decisions

***What are you going to
give me?***



***Does this solve a
problem for me?***

(The Exchange Theory)

***What will I have
to give up?***



***Is it worth the
effort to me?***

Step Into Their Shoes

- What are their realities?
- What problems do they have?
- What are *their* needs and successes?

How does improved school climate make their lives easier?



View The World Through Their Eyes

- What do they value and believe?
- What kind of world do *they* want to live in?



**How does improved
school climate match
their vision of the
world?**

Appealing To the Mind

- The right quantitative data, delivered the right way, based on audience needs.
- Information is indisputable to your audience.
- Logically links their problem with your solution, or helps point the way to the best next steps.

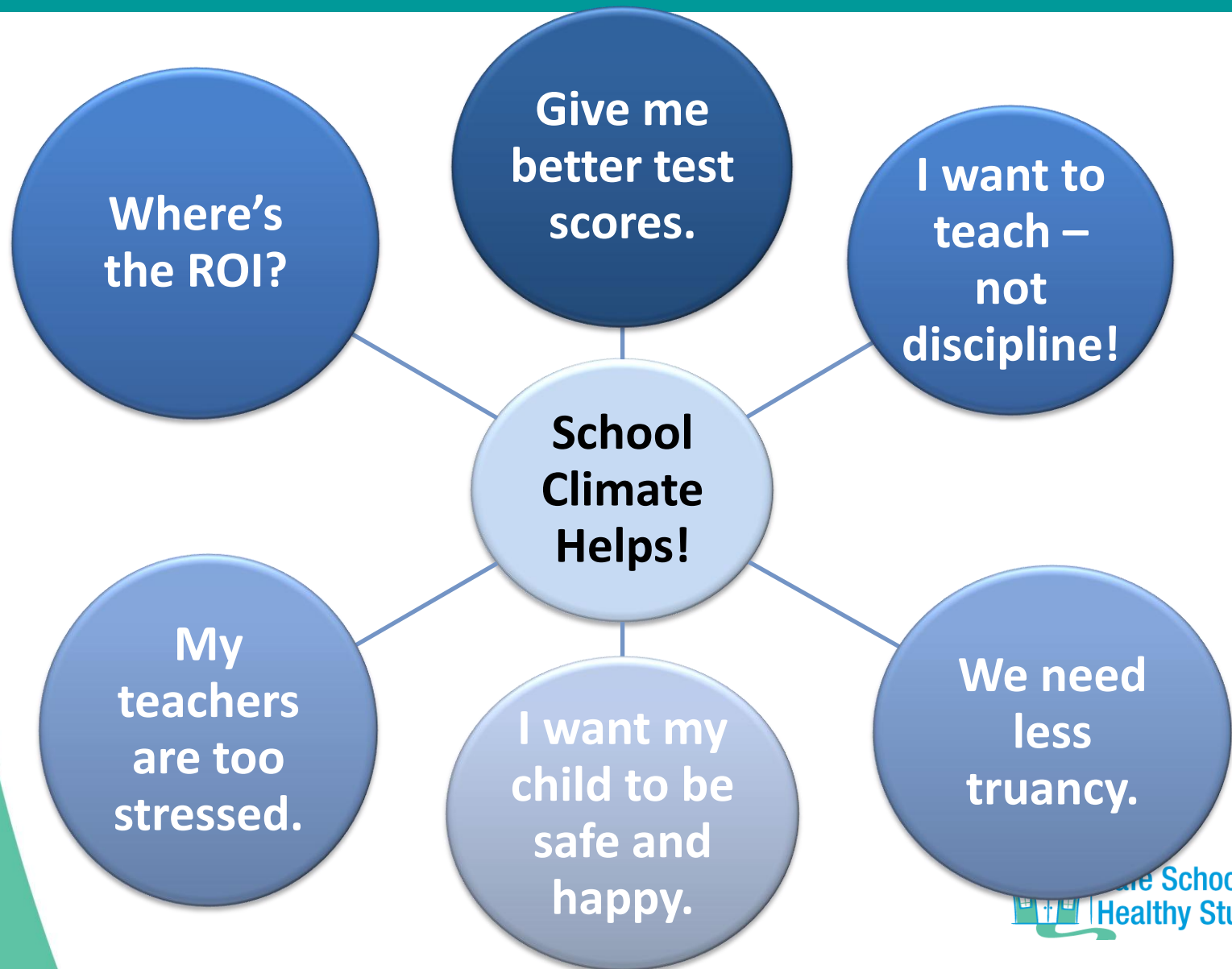
**What data do they want? Quantitative?
Qualitative? Point in time? Longitudinal?**

Appealing To the Heart

- Connects data to the impact on human lives.
- Uses techniques like social math.
- Relies frequently on stories, images.
- Moves audiences, inspires them act.

It's not always what we want them to hear, it's what they're ready to hear.

Framing School Climate Data/Info



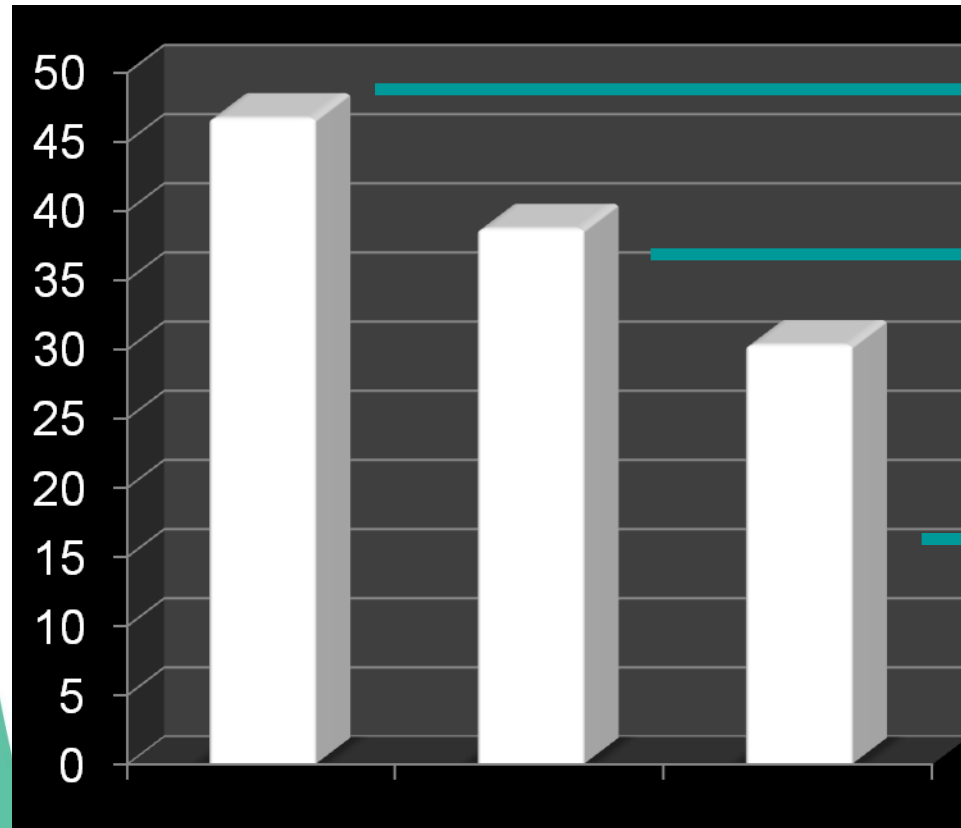
Finding the Story Within the Data

- The programmatic goal:
 - Increase students' sense of school connectedness.
- The communication goal and target audience:
 - Persuade overburdened teachers to fully engage in specific supportive teaching practices.
- The data*:
 - 46.7% report no aspirations for their lives beyond high school.
 - 38.7% of students don't feel an adult cares about them.
 - 30.3% report experiencing hopelessness.

**Sample data of high school district student climate survey, used for illustration only.*



Traditional Representation



46.7% report no aspirations for their lives beyond high school.

38.7% don't believe an adult at school cares about them.

30.3% regularly experience hopelessness.

Our Students/Their World

*Key Findings from 2010 Survey of
District High School Students*

**Almost one-half of students
have no vision for their future
beyond high school.**

**Almost one in three students
regularly feel hopeless.**

**And more than one-third
don't believe that
any of us care.**



A word cloud on a black background featuring various negative experiences. The words are arranged in a layered, overlapping fashion. The largest word is 'hopeless' in orange. Other prominent words include 'no vision for future' in yellow, 'no adult cares' in yellow, 'feel unsafe' in orange, 'isolated' in orange, 'disconnected' in orange, 'unclear expectations' in orange, and 'bullied/harassed' in teal.

isolated disconnected
hopeless
no adult cares feel unsafe
no vision for future
unclear expectations bullied/harassed

Our students have a lot to say:



Almost half of students say they have...



No Future Plans



Four out of ten students believe that...



No Adult Cares



Three out of ten students believe that there is...



No Hope

Could we do a better job of listening?

Connecting With Social Math

- Conveys data so audiences “get it.”
- Creates dramatic comparisons to easily understood references.
- Is a jargon-free way to share research with wider audiences.
- **Requires numbers—not percentages—to create the “equation.”**



Data + Audience's Reality = WOW!!

In 2007, **5.8 percent** of students nationwide ages 12-18 reported avoiding school activities or one or more places in school because they thought someone might attack or harm them.



**Enough children to fill 450,000 school buses.
(That's 3,409 miles of buses.
And that more than stretches from coast to coast.)**

For Example...

- If ... our teachers self-report that they spend an average of 1.5 hours each day keeping order in there classroom...
- Then ... how can we use social math to represent the time lost to discipline issues?

**Hint: $180 \text{ days} \times 1.5 \text{ hrs/day} = 270 \text{ hours}$
 $270 \text{ hrs} \times 7 \text{ hrs/day} = 39 \text{ days lost/year!}$**

**What's the fiscal
impact of this lost
time?
And who will care?**

For Example...

- If ... we have 3,000 middle school students in our district, and 13 percent (390 students) report feeling bullied, harassed or unsafe at school in the past year...
- Then ... how might we use social math to create a powerful illustration of these numbers?

**Would it fill our
auditorium?**

Our cafeteria?

Our gymnasium?

**How many empty
seats in our
classrooms?**

Delivering Our Data/Information

- How should we share it?

- Channels:

- Interpersonal
 - Community based
 - Mass media

- Materials

- Who should convey it?

- How often should it be shared?

the big picture:
building support for safer schools & healthier students

coordinated efforts can make a difference

Supporting the well-being and academic success of children

Enhanced School-based Mental Health Services
Helping remove barriers so children can focus on learning

I thank you for making us better kids and helping us make better choices. We learned that fighting is bad and I am thankful for being in our [social skills] group. It has made me a better person and helped me learn to stay out of trouble.

—Student, in a letter to a mental health service provider

BACKGROUND

The Anaheim City School District expanded its partnership with Western Youth Services to place a mental health service provider at each of the District's 24 schools. Additionally, school counselors and a social worker were placed at Key and Palm Lane schools. The mental health service providers help students learn valuable coping skills during one-on-one and small group sessions. Now children have a trusting adult dedicated to showing them how to control their anger, be kinder to their peers or just make friends.

HIGHLIGHTS

Prior to receiving grant monies, about 2% of students received school-based mental health services. Now an additional 4.1% of students are being served (Safe Schools/Healthy Students and Elementary School Counseling Grants). Also, an estimated 200+ families are helped via informal assistance.

OUR OUTCOME

The mental health service providers have become integrated members at their school sites. Finding new ways to connect students with their peers, teachers and families, the mental health service providers have helped students develop positive prosocial skills and increased school bonding.

For more information about the many programs and services offered through the Anaheim Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative, contact Wendy Dalin, Project Coordinator.
Telephone: (714) 517-7107 • Fax: (714) 556-1990 • E-mail: wdalin@acsd.k12.ca.us
131 W. Midway Drive, Anaheim, CA 92805

Putting It All Together

- Think strategically and with purpose.
- Place the communication needs of our audience front and center.
- Appeal to the audiences' minds *and* hearts.
- Frame our data in their values, beliefs, priorities.
- Represent and deliver data in ways that make sense to our audiences.





Questions?

Jean Synodinos

Senior Communication Specialist, ICF Macro

jsynodinos@icfi.com